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589 765 dition that she does not remarry; the idea being that as long as the bones remain in the widow's keeping, the spirit of her husband is still with her. On this account many wives who revere their husband's memories, and who do not contemplate 587 765 remarriage, purposely keep the bones for a long time. If a widow marries, even after the customary taboo period of one year, whilst her deceased husband's bones are still in her keeping, [346] she is generally looked down upon. Her children in such a case perform the ceremony of handing over the bones of their father to his clan in a building specially erected for the purpose. The widow cannot enter therein, or even go near it, whilst the ceremony is proceeding, no matter whether the *jing sang*, or the price for removing the taboo after a husband's death, has been 595 paid to the husband's clan or not. There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis. Unlike the Thibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time. Certainly at the present day they are monandrists. Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis; such a practice would naturally not be in vogue amongst a people who observe the matriarchate. There are instances, however, of men having wives other than those they have regularly married, and in the Wár country children by such wives enjoy rights to their father's acquired property equally with the children by the legally 582 married wife. As the clans are strictly exogamous, a Khasi 688 cannot take a wife from his own clan; to do this would entail 764 the most disastrous religious, as well as social consequences. For to marry within the clan is the greatest sin a Khasi can commit, and would cause excommunication by his kinsfolk and the refusal of funeral ceremonies at death, and his bones would [115] not be allowed a resting-place in the sepulchre of the clan. To 614 give a list of all the Khasi exogamous clans would perhaps serve no useful purpose, but I have prepared from information, kindly 582 furnished me by the Siems of Khyrim and Cherrapunji, a list of the clans in those States which will be found in Appendices A and B. These will suffice as examples. It will be seen from the Cherra list that the different divisions of the Diengdoh clan, viz. Lalu, Diengdoh-bah, Diengdoh-kylla, are prohibited from intermarriage; this is due to those branches of the clan being

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descended from a common ancestress. There are other instances of clans being connected with one another, such connection being called by the Khasis *iateh kur*. Whenever such connection exists, intermarriage is strictly prohibited, and is considered to be *sang*. There is no custom of hypergamy. A Khasi cannot marry his maternal uncle's daughter during the lifetime of the maternal uncle. This is probably due to the fact that the maternal uncle, or *kni*, in a Khasi household is regarded more in the light of a father than of an uncle. His children, however, would belong to the clan of his wife, and there would, therefore, in ordinary cases be no bar to the nephew marrying one of them. Marriage with the daughters of a father's sister is not allowed during the lifetime of the father, but after the latter's death there is no religious ban, although such unions are looked upon with disfavour by the Khasis. In the Wár country, however, such marriages are totally prohibited. A Khasi cannot marry two sisters, but he can marry his deceased wife's sister after the expiry of one year from the wife's death, on payment of *jing sang* (price of *sang*, or taboo) to the wife's clan. A Khasi cannot marry the daughter of his father's brother, she is his *para kha* (lit. birth sister). Similarly he cannot marry the daughter of his father's paternal uncle. He can, however, marry the daughter of his mother's brother, provided that the brother is dead. This somewhat paradoxical state of affairs is explained by the fact that the children of the mother's brother belong to a different clan to that of the mother, i.e. to the mother's brother's wife's clan. The Khasi, Synteng, Wár, and Lyngam divisions are not strictly endogamous groups, and there is nothing to prevent intermarriage between them. For instance, it has been the custom in the Nongkhlaw Siem family to obtain husbands for the princesses of the state from the Wár country. There is no custom amongst the Khasis of two men exchanging daughters, i.e. each marrying his son to the other's daughter. Notwithstanding the existence of the matriarchate, and the fact that all ancestral property is vested in the mother, it would be a mistake to suppose that the father is a nobody in the Khasi house. It is true that the *kni*, or mother's elder brother, is the head of the house, but the father is the executive head of the new home, where, after children

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have been born to him, his wife and children live with him. It is he who faces the dangers of the jungles, and risks his life for wife and children. In his wife's clan he occupies a very high place, he is second to none but *u kni*, the maternal uncle, while in his own family circle a father and husband is nearer to his children and his wife than *u kni*. The Khasi saying is, "*u kpa uba lah ban iai, u kni uba tang ha ka iap ka im*," which may be translated freely as, "the father bears the heat and burden of the day, the maternal uncle only comes when it is a question of life or death." The Khasi father is revered not only when living, but also after death as *U Thawlang*, and special ceremonies are performed to propitiate his shade. Further remarks on the subject of marriage will be found in the Section which deals with religion.

DIVORCE.

Divorce amongst the Khasis is common, and may occur for a variety of reasons, such as adultery, barrenness, incompatibility of temperament, &c. The rule amongst the Khasis is that both parties must agree, but amongst the Wars, especially the people of Shella, the party who divorces the other without his or her consent must pay compensation, which is called *ka mynrain*, or *ka thuem*. Amongst the Khasis it is not the custom to enforce restitution of conjugal rights; as a rule, when husband and wife cannot live together amicably, they agree to divorce one another; but occasionally it happens that either the husband or the wife will not agree to a divorce. Usually the husband would be willing to live with his wife; but when the latter consents neither to live with her husband nor to accept a divorce, a difficult situation arises, and it is in the event of such a contingency happening that the necessity of assessing *ka mynrain*, or *ka thuem* (compensation), occurs. The latter is computed by the village elders. Parties who have been divorced cannot afterwards remarry one another, but they are at liberty to marry into other families. A woman cannot be divorced during pregnancy. The following description of the divorce ceremony is taken from U Jeebon Roy's note on the

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586 Khasi religion. If the marriage has been celebrated according to the *pynhiar synjat* rite, a *ksiang* (go-between) is necessary on each side, also the *kni*, or maternal uncles of the parties, to witness the divorce. In other cases the presence of the *ksiang* is unnecessary, but some acquaintances and friends as well as the relatives on both sides should witness the ceremony. The husband and the wife each bring five cowries (*sbài*), or, more commonly nowadays, five pice. The wife gives her five cowries or pice to her husband, who places them with his, and then returns the five cowries or coins to his wife, together with his own five. The wife then returns the ten shells or coins to the husband who throws them on the ground. A crier (*u nòng* [203] *pyrta shnong*) then goes round the village to proclaim the divorce, using the following words:—

"Kaw—hear, oh villagers, that U—— and K—— have become separated in the presence of the elders. Hei! thou, oh, young man, canst go and make love to Ka—— for she is now unmarried (*khynraw*), and thou, oh, spinster, canst make love to U——. Hei! there is no let or hindrance from henceforth." Among the Khasis divorce must be by mutual consent, [587] and the ceremony must take place in the open air. Until the divorce ceremony has been performed as above described, neither husband nor wife can marry again, but after it has taken place, either can remarry, but not within the family of the divorced husband or wife. In the event of a husband or wife being absent for a long period, say ten years, without any communication having been received from either of them, a divorce ceremony is performed by the relatives on his or her behalf. It is stated by U Jeebon Roy* that the rule of 595 monogamy is not so strict for the husband as it is for the wife, 428 he can contract an informal alliance with another woman, the only prohibition being that she must not belong to the original wife's village. Such a wife is called *ka tyngn tuh*, literally, stolen wife, in contradistinction to the legally married wife (*ka tyngn tuei*). The children by the unmarried wife are called *ki khun kliar* (children from the top). By children from the top, is understood to mean children from the branches not from the root (*trai*) of the tree. Such children cannot claim ancestral property except in the wife's country.

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* See page 12, "Ka Niam Khasi." (U Jeebon Roy.)

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765 If any stream has to be crossed, a rough bridge is made of
764 branches and grass. This trail of leaves and the bridges are intended to guide the spirit of the deceased to the cairn. The person who carries the bones is not allowed to turn round, or to the right, or to the left, but must proceed straight to the cairn. On reaching it, a *nongkaia*, or sacrificer, washes the bones three times and then places them in an earthen pot, tying up the mouth with a white cloth. Then, having taken three pieces of the hard yolk of an egg, three loaves of bread, the leg of the fowl, "*u'iar krad lynti*," and the lower jaw-bones of the animals which have been sacrificed, he places them inside the cairn and shuts the door. Eatables and
765 betel-nut are then placed on the top of the cairn. Early next
787 morning the relatives and friends go to the cairn with fresh food and water, and look about for new foot-prints, the idea being
[775] that from these foot-prints they can foretell future events. This they do until the third night after the cremation. During these three nights the front door of the house formerly occupied by the deceased is never closed, it being thought that the spirit may wish to return and visit its earthly abode. The whole family is moreover *sang*, or taboo, during this period, and no manner of work can be done. When the three nights are over, it is called the *lait ia*, i.e. the days (*of* mourning) are passed, and three eggs are broken to ascertain what was the cause of the death. After this the family goes to bathe, and
[783] the clothes and mats in the house are washed. When this has been done, the taboo is removed and the family can go to work. After a month a pig or a fowl is sacrificed, the ceremony
782 being called "*ai bam lait kwai*." It will be observed that *three*
765 seems to be the lucky number throughout these funeral
801 ceremonies. The number seems to bear a similar significance in other matters of Khasi ritual, e.g. the pouring out of libations, which is always done three times.

• 587 It is *sang* or taboo for a Khasi widow to re-marry within one
428 year from the death of her husband, there is a similar prohibition for a husband re-marrying; but such *sang* can be got over by the payment of a fine to the clan of the deceased. After the expiration of one year the fine is reduced in amount. Khasi widows do not as a rule re-marry, according to U Jaobon Roy,

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587 unless they have no female children, in which case the clan
428 urges them to re-marry, so that the chain of inheritance may not be broken, inheritance amongst the Khasis always passing in the female line.

CUSTOMS IN CONNECTION WITH DEATHS BY VIOLENCE OR ACCIDENT.

766 These customs are interesting enough to deserve a separate
782 description; they are as follows:—

776 If a man dies by the sword, before his body can be burnt, a sacrifice of a black hen must be offered to *Ka Tyrut*, the goddess of death. The bones are then placed in a stone cairn. Again they are removed, and, after eggs have been broken, are taken to a river bank and there washed. If there is no river at hand, a tank is dug for the purpose, which is called *umkoi*. There are various such *umkois* in different parts of the district, e.g. near Raliang and Nartiang. A sacrifice of a goat is offered to the god *U Syngkai Bamon*, and a sow to *Ka Ramshandi*, both of whom are evil deities. Another sow is sacrificed to *Ka Tyrut*. After this the bones are placed in another newly-built cairn. The ceremony of placing the bones in one and
[787] then removing them to another cairn is usually performed three times; but unless the auspices, as deduced from the eggs, are favourable, the relatives must go on sacrificing and removing the bones until they are so. These ceremonies having been completed, they erect a flat table-stone, or *mawkynthei*, for the ghost of the departed to sit upon, and return home, where they propitiate their ancestors with offerings of food. In the case of the murdered victims of the *thlen* superstition the same ceremonies are observed. For people who have died by drowning, or been killed by wild animals, and for women who have died in child-birth, similar pujas are
766 offered, except that a sacrifice to *U Syngkai Bamon* does not
782 take place. In the case of one who has died at a distance from his home, e.g. in a foreign country, whose body has not been burnt in accordance with custom, and whose bones have not been collected, the members of his clan, or his children, take three or five seeds or cowries (*sbai*) to a place where three roads meet. Here they summon the spirit of the departed in a loud voice,

782 The Khasi also erect little platforms with little houses from long bamboo sticks in which food is served to the spirits of the woods and fields (to serve [siang-] actually means spread out, as one spreads out a carpet or as one spreads out leaves for serving rice on).

[789] But not only through making sacrifices do the Khasi try to propitiate the devils and thereby make them harmless. They even try it with violence. Thus, as mentioned above, they drive the cholera demoness out of the house with sticks. Also during a cremation they shoot three arrows to ward off evil spirits.

There are many ways of warding off evil spirits; or, for acquiring their help words, wishes, or curses are used, as, for example, during a match of arrow shooting, the watchers who stand by the target try to keep the arrows of the opponents from hitting the target by calling on some god (ksuid) and the more they shriek, the sooner they believe they will attain their purpose. They wish to influence the arrows of the opponents.

3. Taboos (sang)

784 782 The sang or taboos of the Khasi also belong to superstition. Sang means the same as "sacrilegiously or most strictly forbidden." This sang can be traced back to totemistic views. Sang can be something for a single person, for a house (iing) or a family, for a sib and a whole race (jaid). If a man or a woman whose spouse has [58] 428] died remarries, the sang is transferred to the relatives of the deceased man or woman. This "inheritance" of the sang is different according to the sib. By accepting the sang the inheritors must pay 11 of a [ki] kaw or 7 1/2 of a kaw or 5 1/2 of a kaw. By kaw the number 1280 is actually understood. But it means, however, that

not so!) See here the piece u dykhot (11) and

11. A piece of sacrificial meat.

the sour things u lamjew (12) (a strong and

12. Herbs, roots.

sweet liquor) not (is it not so!)

All relatives and acquaintances, friends and neighbors are invited to this sacrificial feast. There is a big festive meal, chiefly of meat and bacon. But before the eating begins, the reng (horn) and ngap (fork) which were laid on the "adulterer stone" before the cursing of the pig are removed. At this sacrifice all the money collected before (11 or 7 1/2 or 5 1/2 of a kha) must be completely used up, as it is forbidden to preserve any of it in house so that it will not get mixed up with the daily wage or one's earnings.

The remarriage must naturally occur in another sib (jaid) if the sang is to be inherited; because otherwise the sang would remain in the family.

Most of the sang that occur, different according to the families or the sibs, are the following: (13)

13. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 5.

1. Building a house with stone walls on all four sides.
2. The use of iron nails in building a house.
3. The use of more than one kind of wood in building a hearth.
4. The use of resinous wood in building a house.
5. Felling wood in a holy forest (except

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divides equally. U Sobu Rai explained that each house counted as a separate unit. Thus if Ka Jem, Ka Jin and all their daughters were alive, the married daughters who lived in a separate house, namely, Ka Laimon, Ka Laibon, Ka Aimon and Ka Hoiman of Ka Jem's house, and Ka Phre of Ka Jin's line, would each get a share. But Ka Jem and her Ka Khadduh Ka Aiben who lives in the mother's house would get only one share. So would Ka Jin, Ka Kiriboo and the unmarried daughters of the latter. The descendants of Ka Lung would get seven equal shares for distribution to each house, and not two shares first, divided later into shares corresponding to the number of daughters for Ka Jem's and Ka Jin's house. The manager does not get any share of the collections. Authority in the management of the ancestral property therefore passes from one male to another, in the extended family, and the Kur, in a manner which necessitates a clear distinction of seniority and juniority of brothers, among themselves and also of sisters with regard to brothers.

The case of succession is similar. Gurdon notes that the Siemship in Mylliem State passes from a man to his next brother, and "failing such brothers, by the eldest of his sisters' sons; failing such nephews by the eldest of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand nephews by the eldest of the sons of his mother's sisters" and so forth in the female line. In Nongkrem, the son or similar male relative of the High Priestess becomes by delegation a Siem. The office of the High Priestess passes from a woman to her eldest surviving daughter; and failing daughters to the eldest daughter of her eldest daughter; failing daughters of her eldest daughter, to the eldest daughter of her second daughter, and so on. This is the customary line of succession, and is stated by Gurdon to be "uniform in all cases" practically.

Neither levirate, nor sororate are practised by the Khasis. Widows are stated (G) quite often not to remarry if there are daughters. There is no question of the control of the property

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587 421 of the woman by her husband. No occasion arises either of taking his place on death, by his brother or by sister's son; or of a sister of a deceased wife being made over to a man, as is the custom among Garos, where the husband of the heiress manages the property of his wife. Among the Khasis, the widow or widower cannot normally remarry before the end of a year after the death of the husband or wife. When a year is over, a payment is made to the Kur of the deceased to remove 587 782 the disability. If the man or woman want to remarry before the year is out, a larger sum is paid. In Mawphlang, a sum of Rs. 5-4-0 is paid at the end of the year and Rs. 11-4-0 for untimely remarriage (within the year). The payment is made to the Ka Khadduh of the deceased in each case, and a ceremony severing the relation with the dead spouse is performed. A pig is purchased with the money and it is sacrificed in the house of the Ka Khadduh by a man—usually a neighbour. If the deceased was a man, the following invocation is made: [539] "Ha kane ka mied la shim nong sang bad knia nong sang ia phi. Ka tnga uta uta ban ia khuid."

Free translation :—

"On this night the tabooed person is sacrificing to you. The wife of so-and-so (naming the man) is hereby made pure."

The pig is then killed by thrusting an iron spike through the shoulder. It is then cooked and eaten by the people present. This mode of killing is known as "dung."

The myntri Orongsing, whose genealogy has been noted, remarried a year after the death of his first wife Ka Resimai. This woman died two years ago, and the ceremony for removing the bar on remarriage was performed only last year. The money was made over to an old man U Ru, who is well acquainted with the rites. He purchased a pig and killed it by the "dung" method in the compound of Ka Resimai's mother, Ka Sheribon. The spike might be of wood or iron, stated U Itchon. I was informed by the myntri U Subu Rai that the ceremony of

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removal of the bar on remarriage was also of the same kind elsewhere in the neighbouring States. Clearly, the idea of leviration or sororation is incompatible with this idea of the marriage bond continuing even after death and necessitating a ceremony to break it. It may also be noted that while the Khasis permit divorce somewhat easily, remarriage is not permitted of either party "within the family of the divorced husband or wife" (G). A Khasi cannot also marry two sisters, although he can marry irregularly, more than one woman and also the wife's sister after the decease of the wife. We can now discuss why a woman or a man refers to the brothers and sisters of the husband or wife by the kinship terms used by the spouse, qualified by a special term. When a man marries and goes to live in the house of his wife's mother, he comes in contact with unmarried sisters of the wife. But he knows that they are sexually to be avoided. He lives in the wife's mother's house only during the life time of his wife. A wife's sister is comparable to a Kur sister sexually, during this period.

But his economic relations and religious ties require that a distinction should be made between these "sisters" and the "Kur sisters." The qualifying term supplies this requirement. The woman, on the other hand, has no direct relations with her husband's brothers. She has however to keep in touch with the husband's female relatives. The bones of the husband go over to the mother's house and eventually to the clan ossuary. The husband is also a potential manager of the property of his female relatives. She has therefore to take note of the order in age of her husband's sisters. As her husband uses the terms for sisters for the sisters-in-law, it is quite natural for her to extend such usage to her husband's sisters. The brothers of the husband do not count at all so far as the woman is concerned, and she will not therefore have any special term for them. As the sisters are referred to as Para Kynsi and Hymmen Kynsi, so will the brothers of the husband be referred to by similar terms. The absence of any sexual privileges between the woman and her

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of marriages between these two *kur*. Such marriage arrangements cannot be regarded as constituting a cross-cousin institution. From my data of four villages it was not possible to produce any institutionalized pattern.

In general, the selection of a marital partner depends mainly on personal choice, though the authority of the *iing* (descent group) and parents should be consulted. The man proposes to the girl. The network of marriage relations among the Khasi seems in no way to follow any set principle. Every marriage is likely to be fortuitous: it is ruled simply by temporary personal liking, except for the strict rule of exogamy and the avoidance of near kin.

Exogamy is strictly kept. In the olden days breaking this rule was equivalent to being sentenced to death. Offenders had their heads shaved in a particular way and had to leave the Khasi community completely. Even now such a marriage is considered as the worst kind of sin; a Khasi Christian intellectual said to me that it was worse than homicide. I came across one couple who had broken this rule. Though they had different *kur* names, both *kur* were segments of one common *kur*. It happened in Jatinga, one of the most modern Khasi communities whose inhabitants were all Christians. The couple were not allowed to have their house inside the village. Their house was in the jungle about one mile away from the village.

Successive sororate marriage—marriage to a younger sister of the late wife—is practised, since it justifies the widower in remaining in the same household as his children after his wife's death. Otherwise, the Khasi rule demands that he should leave the house and his children in order to remarry another woman. We shall deal with this aspect again in terms of marriage.

II. Principle of Descent and Succession

Previously I have mentioned the *kpoh*, the matrilineal kin group with a common great grandmother. This is not, however, an institutional corporate descent group. The most important functional descent unit is called *iing*. The *iing* is the lowest order of clan segmentation, smaller than the *kpoh*—a *kpoh* may include two or more *iing*. The generation depth of an *iing* is usually two to four, in some cases an *iing* is formed only by mother and child. The Khasi consider this unit to be the most important social index for the classification of individuals. Marriages are arranged by individual *iing*, not by wider groups of kinsmen. The *iing* is the structurally significant norm. The term *iing* is also used for a house building itself, as is the *nok* of the Garo. However, the membership of the *iing*, as I shall

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592 593 604 always somewhat outside the family conversation which was centred on the maternal uncle and his sisters, nephews and nieces, by whom I was well taken care of. This is somewhat similar to the situation amongst the Cewa and the Yao of the Central Bantus, which have what Richard calls 'the detachable husband' (Richards, 1950, pp. 233-35, 248), though the parallel is not by any means exact.

428 581 586 [604] [606] [592] [593] There is, therefore, inevitably an element of tension in the relations between the wife's maternal uncle (including parents-in-law) and the husband (son-in-law) and this tension makes the latter's life extremely uncomfortable. This awkward position is well shown in the divorce rate. At Kongton (see List 9), out of 61 couples (house-owners and their spouses), the number of persons who had experience of divorce was 33 (female 15, male 18) and those married more than twice numbered 19 (female 7, male 12). Out of 61 couples, there were only 31 in which neither husband nor wife had been divorced. In my census of Jatinga village, 70 per cent of all divorce cases were marriages to heiresses. In general, the period when divorce occurs more frequently is before a couple get children and after the wife has passed the child-bearing age. A marriage breaks up either through the action of the wife or of the husband, but generally through that of the wife. However, the state of separation which I presently describe is brought about by the husband, though later it results in a divorce from the wife. Divorce does not mean a great catastrophe for a Khasi wife, especially if she is an heiress and her husband's economic contribution is not significant. Moreover, in this society remarriage is as easy for a widow or divorcée, as it is to divorce. In the villages of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the couple who wants to divorce has only to throw a few Annas together in the presence of some witness, usually an elderly man.

• [587]

581 593 In addition to divorce, there are many actual separations of husband and wife, of short or long duration, when the husband runs away from his wife's house to his sister's. Though it does not always end in divorce, considerable number of husbands have a strong tendency to spend most of their time at their sister's house. Khasi women often told me, "I don't know why he does not come back to my place." I have often found the husband staying at his sister's house only a few houses away from his wife's, without any particular reason. They are obliged to see each other every day whether divorced or separated. This kind of ambiguity in the marriage relation seems to have an important correlation with the Khasi social structure, combined with the village endogamy. The man and and wife have grown up together from their childhood in the same village and known each other very well. Hence their psychology cannot clearly distinguish the marriage form as a newly-established independent social relation-

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182 586 613 736 Even after divorce or husband's death, the Khasi woman stays on in her household. Indeed many divorced or widowed poor wives, whose children are still small, try their best to live and bring up their children by themselves without asking their brothers' help. Of course a mother and her small children may go back to live in her natal *iing*. Such cases are found particularly when the woman's *iing* is rich. However, during my field work, I found no sense of psychological inferiority in Khasi women, widows or divorcées, such as we usually find in other societies. The personality of the individual seems to reflect the social structure.

182 184 586 593 613 Given such strong residential independence on the part of the non-heiress, economically divorced from her descent group, and oriented towards sociological separation from it, the husband's economic and social contribution is handsomely rewarded by the establishment of a stable, happier, matrimonial life. In fact, as already mentioned, the divorce rate among such couples is very low contrasted with the high rate among marriages with heiresses. More accurately, I should say that divorce is more likely to occur among the latter owing to the conflict of loyalties towards spouse and *iing*. Therefore, when each partner has less loyalty towards his or her natal *iing*, the divorce cases become correspondingly fewer. Thus, among the Khasi, successful marriages are frequently found where there is branching off from an *iing*. And a new *iing* is always established by a husband's contribution.

182 184 581 Khasi men, who are well aware of this fact, prefer to marry a non-heiress, since they will then form an independent household and remain immune to pressure from their wife's kin. However, they say a poor or lazy man prefers marriage with an heiress. As Richards said of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the residence on marriage seems to be a most important index of the husband's status, though the determining factors of the residence of the Khasi differ from those of the Bantus (see p. 124).

182 184 587 593 613 736 In the case of marriage with an heiress, when the wife dies, the husband usually returns to his *iing* (the youngest sister's house). But in marriage with a non-heiress the husband often remains with his children, if his children are not too small and he is not planning to marry any woman other than his late wife's younger sister. If he marries his wife's younger sister, he has the right to stay on. This kind of sororal marriage cannot take place in the case of a man married to an heiress, since a Khasi man is not allowed to marry the late wife's elder sister. This form of sororate is found among the Khasi, but the levirate is unknown, such as can be seen among the Ashanti and the Ila, where a man takes his late brother's wife. Among the Khasi, even if a widow happened to marry her late husband's

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brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological implication in the social structure, which is specifically related to the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti and the Ila, etc.

VI. Marriage of the Man of Authority of an *Iing*

Among these successful marital families, there are also shadows of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in the position of authority in an *iing*. Such a man, though he has an independent household with his wife and children, often visits his youngest sister's (or niece's) house, *iing (ka iing sen)*, and sometimes stays there. Such a man's attachment to his *iing* is not only social or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority of his natal *iing*, usually has economic control over the management, particularly so, if his *iing* has considerable property or active trading business. As husband/father in his family he works for his wife and children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of his *iing*. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in Shella and Jatinga, where the main economic activities were based on trading.

Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

A man of Jatinga, who worked in a shop in Haflong, spent his salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus, the economy of the *iing* and that of the co-residential group are crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy. However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired property goes to his co-residential group, not to his *iing*.

A man of authority is attached to his *iing* by the stronger ties of religious, social and economic (management) duties as well as by

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strip of fine silk for the loins, a part of which hangs gracefully as low as the calves in front. No notice is here taken of what has undoubtedly been added and borrowed from their more civilised neighbours in the plains. 291

'MARRIAGE.—The marriageable age for females is from 15 to 18; for males, from 18 to 24. Matrimonial alliances are contracted either through the parents or the living representatives of the families to which the parties belong. The mode of procedure is still very primitive and unceremonious. The bridegroom, escorted by a number of friends and relatives, goes to the house of the bride, where all are feasted and lodged for the night; on the morrow he leads the bride, accompanied by a number of her relatives, to his own house, and entertains the company with dishes of boiled rice and fresh pork. After remaining there a day or two, the newly-married couple return together to the house of the wife, which becomes their future home. Marriage is dissoluble by regular divorce, for any sufficient cause, and often without any assignable reason except mutual dislike or want of issue, the latter being the most common case of all. Marriage with the Khásiás is simply a conventional arrangement, with nothing further for its object than the procreation of children; failing that, it is no longer looked upon as a contract permanently binding. Divorce is effected in the presence of eye-witnesses—the parents, or the heads of clans. Five cowries (*kauris*) are produced by the parties and exchanged, then cast away by mutual consent, and the ceremony is over. Parties once divorced can never again contract marriage with each other, but they are at liberty to marry into other families. Polygamy, strictly so called, is not sanctioned by Khásí custom. Adultery is looked upon as a serious crime. If the five cowries have not been cast away by mutual consent, both husband and wife are held to be subject to the "matrimonial demon;" and even when either dies in wedlock, the survivor is not at liberty to contract a fresh alliance until he or she pays the family a sum of money as the means of removing the surviving party from subjection to the "matrimonial demon." The husband is a stranger, so to speak, in the family he has entered, and perpetuates the race of others, not his own. The children in all questions of lineage and personal rights follow the mother. There are always two interests in the same family—that of the husband, and that of the wife. Whatever the husband may have earned or acquired in

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